

The Treasure Trove of the Knights Templars

The Inquisition failed to eliminate the mysterious Knights Templars. The Order went 'underground' for centuries but has been reborn in recent decades.

Will the secret Templar treasures, allegedly found below a castle in France, ever be revealed?

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THE MYSTERY IN PERSPECTIVE

The date was 18 March 1314. On a small island in the River Seine in Paris, three persons were burnt to death: Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the Order of the Knights Templars, then the world's most famous and wealthiest organisation; Geoffroi de Charney, the Order's Preceptor of Normandy; and a third person, whose identity varies from author to author. It was the official end of 200 years of Western European history that was dominated by the Crusades to reclaim the Holy Land, the introduction of paper money, and the meteoric rise of a group of celibate warrior-monks.

Hundreds of books detail the story of who the Templars were, how they gained both wealth and influence, and the circumstances that caused their downfall. In the end, though, certain things are left unexplained or unaddressed. In recent years, the mystery of the Templars has been a source of wealth for many international bestseller-writers, but some of their statements are outright lies, contradictions or misunderstandings of events. In any case, there are many enigmas concerning the Templars that probably won't ever be solved. But upon the horrible and burnt remains of these three people, a mystery began that has influenced history and society ever since.

There are several unanswered questions at the centre of the Templar enigma. Was there an inner circle, with a specific teaching comprising esoteric ideas or a secret doctrine? What happened to the fabled Templar treasure for which so many people were tortured and killed? Did this treasure contain documents or other material that identifies the possible secret doctrine of an inner group? Can that treasure be located and retrieved? Finally, the most intriguing question of all. Did the Order of the Knights Templars, and all that it stood for, disappear completely or did it continue as a secret 'underground' movement?

The answers to these questions may well lie within a small castle in the Rhône Valley. Moreover, the genesis of the current interest in the Templars can be found there as well.

It seems evident that the last of the Templars had foreknowledge of their impending arrests. They also knew that putting up a fight would be futile. They realised their time had come, and probably started preparing for a secret survival of the Order, very much like the Germans tried to do at the end of the Second World War.

One document that details the survival of the Knights Templars is the "Document Rubant", named after its author. Based on source material dated 11 April 1308, the origins of this document have never been contested, though few, if any, historians and writers on the subject credit it or know of its existence. This document is dated from the 18th century, before the enigma of the Templars became fashionable, and it seems very unlikely that it is a fake. If it were, it would definitely be the most unsuccessful fake ever.

The document states that all the documents "taken by the researchers of Philip Le Bel were real fakes, produced a long time before, in case an uncontrollable or unforeseen attack on the Order would occur; a kind of fail-safe mechanism in place since the beginning of the Order." The document states that the goal of the Templar researches in the Holy Land was to access a "knowing" of a very high level. This knowledge, for Rubant, is the reason for the Order's existence. It was a quest that dictated the inner circle of the Order and largely influenced the Order's history; a carefully prepared initiation to understand a total and all-enveloping knowledge that is guarded by an Egyptian goddess who caresses that information behind her veil. Rubant states that "the Templars were definitely much more advanced than us, because of a secret knowledge they had gained in books.

They discovered a complete and absolute knowledge...", or wisdom.

Rubant echoes the words of Raoul de Presle de Laon, lawyer and legal expert for the King's Court. "When I lived in Laon, one of my friends, who was Rector of the Temple of Laon, Brother Gervais de Beauvais told me, I do not know how many times, in front of several witnesses, that within the Order there existed a rule that was so extraordinary, and upon which such a strict secret nature was placed, that people would prefer to have their heads chopped off instead of divulging it. At the General Chapter there existed a secret practice that, even if the king of France was a witness, the members of the chapter would kill him without any regard as to the quality of the man. He vowed to me that he possessed a rule of the Order that he showed voluntarily, but that he also possessed a more secret one which he wouldn't show to any person not initiated."

Was this the secret which Grand Master Jacques de Molay held while being tortured by the Inquisition? On 26 November 1308 he told the Inquisition: "I would like to tell you certain things, if only you weren't the people you are, and if you were authorised to hear it." On 28 November he reiterated his desire to confide something in the Pope. It seems he was willing to lift the veil on something that was too complex for the mere mortal, and which apparently involved some form of unification between Christianity and the secret doctrine of the Templars.

Alas, the Pope would not hear de Molay, so it seems that de Molay must have decided that the Orders' treasure had to survive on its own—and chose the little French village of Arginy as the place to bear the treasure of the Templars. On the night of 12 October 1307—the night before the Templars' arrest in France—two knights stayed at Arginy, only to leave the place in the middle of the night and be arrested at Macon the following morning.

In a story that is both strange and recurring, it is said that on the eve of being burned, Jacques de Molay asked for his nephew, a certain Count de Beaujeu, after having bought the silence of his keepers and the soldiers with gold. The meeting took place in the Grand Master's cell and is said to have lasted some considerable time. Jacques de Molay gave his nephew certain instructions: he was to go to the Temple in Paris, where the former Grand Masters of the Order were buried, retrieve a crystal relic and bring it back to de Molay as soon as possible. Then followed a second meeting that had grave implications for the survival of the Order. De Molay explained to de Beaujeu that the relic he had just recovered from the Temple was John the Baptist's sacred index finger with which he had identified Jesus Christ. The treasure had been given to the Order by the former King of Jerusalem, Baudoin.

Afterwards, de Molay entrusted the future survival of the Order upon de Beaujeu, giving his nephew the necessary information to make sure he could bring his delicate mission to a fortunate end. He gave him the keys and the directions to a place known only to the Grand Master, close to the tomb of a former Grand Master. De Beaujeu would discover the secret of the Order's existence in a coffer.

After his encounter with Jacques de Molay, de Beaujeu had to gain entry into the Temple. He came up with the excuse that he wanted to conserve the mortal remains of his uncle, a former Grand Master of the Order, so, for a small fortune, he was allowed in. De Beaujeu and nine other survivors recovered the precious relics and placed them in a 'pretend' sarcophagus. Certain researchers think the team set course for Cyprus, where the headquarters of the Order could harbour the smugglers and their treasure. But tradition informs us that de Beaujeu rapidly moved towards the only place where the treasure would be safe: Arginy, a castle that belonged to him but was not Templar property.

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THE SUBTERRANEAN SECRETS OF ARGINY CASTLE

Daniel Réju describes Arginy as "an isolated castle in the plains, between Saône and Beaujolais", north of Lyons. Its origins go back to the Celtic Druids who exploited a saltmine in the vicinity. Arginus, a veteran of Roman Emperor Julius Caesar and probably a man initiated into the ancient Greek mysteries, built a small fortress which he named after himself. A millennium later, the ruined castle was rebuilt, and passed into the ownership of the de Beaujeu family. In later centuries, it was bought by Vinols, a close friend of Jacques Coeur, one of the wealthiest merchants of France, if not the world. Apparently, Coeur did not want to buy the castle, as that might make people suspicious. Still, Coeur apparently had a major interest in the castle and tried to stay as close to it as possible.

But let us return to the de Beaujeu family. Arginy became the principal seat of the family in 1253. Some decades later, Guillaume de Beaujeu would become a famous Grand Master of the Knights Templars,

dying in the massacre of St Jean d'Acre, a military disaster in the Middle East that heralded the downfall of the Knights Templars. Guillaume de Beaujeu's remains were taken to the Temple in Paris, where they were placed amongst those of the other Grand Masters of the Order. In 1314, his remains, together with the secret treasure of the Order, were placed in a sarcophagus and taken to Arginy, which was owned by strong Templar defenders but not a Templar property as such, and therefore out of reach for Philip Le Bel and his brutal Inquisition.

Arginy castle is situated on top of the intersection of three underground rivers and thus is a phenomenal source of water. The castle is equipped with underground rooms—apparently so essential in storing any kind of treasure. Because of the mining industry that existed there in much earlier times, there are several natural caverns near or underneath the castle. Indeed, it is a veritable maze of underground tunnels, caverns and rooms which could effectively cloak any treasure. As the Templars were also well-versed in hydrology, it seems only logical to assume that they could have engineered a system which could quickly open and flood these underground caverns—which is exactly what happened at Arginy, where the underground rivers could supply them

with enormous quantities of water to fulfil their task.

Though the treasure was apparently safe, the reputation of the castle as holding the Templar treasure became public knowledge, at least in certain circles. In later centuries, the dukes of Camus and Moncepey bought the castle. One member of the Camus family put alchemical graffiti in one of the chambers and on the herald of the castle. He made sure he would be buried in a subterranean chamber, so he arranged for his tomb to be defended by traps that would release huge quantities of water to surprise any trespasser. Tradition tells us that the tomb is very near the fabled treasure left by Jacques de Molay through his nephew, Count de Beaujeu.

Others involved in the Templar treasure hunt report that several levels of subterranean galleries exist underneath the castle. It is known that later owners of the castle made use of some or many of these galleries.

THE TREASURE HUNT BEGINS

The first organised search of the treasure trove left by de Beaujeu was organised by one of his descendants, Anne de Beaujeu. She talked about "very old documents that testified about the presence of a major and historical depot". The men entering the underground network of tunnels were decimated by traps that had probably been put in place by Count de Beaujeu. Anne de Beaujeu eventually gave up and had the entrance to the underground network sealed off.

In 1914, the new owner of the castle, Duke Pierre de Rosemont, felt the time was ripe for a new enterprise. After breaking down the wall that Anne de Beaujeu had built, the Duke opened the entrance to the underground caverns. One of his workmen, however, had his legs crushed when he was hit by two stone balls that rolled out of a wall—another trap installed so many centuries earlier. De Rosemont decided to change his tactics and opted for safer methods. After some scouting of his own, de Rosemont discovered a hole that led downwards, so he decided to try to reach the treasure on his own.

One of the Duke's descendants claims to have excellent evidence concluding that Pierre de Rosemont was able to gain access to the tomb of Camus—said to be very close to the secret treasure of the Knights Templars. Apparently, though, having almost reached his goal, the Duke was struck by violent blows and cries emanating from below, balls of mauve fire encircling the room, and strange odours and visions. When the water began to rise

mysteriously, he decided to retreat as quickly as he could. Upon reaching the surface, he decided never to return, so he made sure that no one would ever discover the hole through which he had reached the underground network.

The oldest part of the castle is a tower—the "Tower of the Eight Beauties". Constructed in red bricks, its walls are more than one metre thick. It appears circular from the outside, but inside, on the first floor, the tower becomes octagonal. At the top are eight openings that appear to have no functional use. It is also known as the "Tower of Alchemy", for the walls were once covered with alchemical symbols. Though these symbols are almost invisible today, but we have photographic records of them in our possession.

It was towards this tower that two of the greatest alchemists of our age set course: Eugène Canselier and Armand Barbault, the author of *Gold of a Thousand Mornings*. Their visit to the castle was not a tourist outing; instead, Barbault and his wife stayed there for several weeks, in the company of the now infamous Jacques Breyer.

In 1950, a mysterious English colonel came to Arginy and asked whether the owner, Gilbert Marie Jacques de Chambrun d'Uxeloup de Rosemont, was willing to sell the estate for no less than one hundred million French francs. De Rosemont flatly refused. Two years later, he and Jacques Breyer decided to have another go at discovering the treasure of Arginy.

THE BIRTH OF NEO-TEMPLARISM

The new team decided to dig underneath the Tower of the Eight Beauties. In their search they hit upon the underground

stream that was responsible for the sudden flooding that had plagued previous seekers. Jacques Breyer believed that the Templar treasures at Arginy consisted of several different forms, each requiring a certain kind of focus on his part if he was going to find them. He believed that there was a material treasure, taken from the Treasury of the Temple in Paris and therefore possibly involving large quantities of gold; a spiritual treasure, detailing the rituals and doctrines of the Order; and an esoteric treasure—a treasure of Wisdom that contained information on magic and Hermetic rituals. Breyer also believed that the castle might have been specifically converted into an "alchemical stronghold" so that certain alchemical experiments could take place there. In any case, it does seem that alchemical thought was applied in the Tower's construction.



The "Tower of the Eight Beauties" at Arginy castle

The birthdate of neo-Templarism is currently accepted as 12 June 1952; the birthplace: Arginy. The event is often referred to as the "the Resurgence of Arginy". Indeed, Arginy became the focal point of the Rosicrucians, Freemasons and other strange orders as well as numerous "Templar Orders". Important figures made visits to the castle. Amongst the visitors was Constantin Melnik, head of the French Secret Service and confidant of the French Minister of the Interior, Michel Debré, who visited the castle in 1959. Guarded by members of the Secret Service who cordoned off the entire castle, Melnik reportedly participated in night-time ceremonies held within the castle walls.

It was on 12 June 1952 that the first such alchemical ritual was held, conducted by Breyer, Barbault and his psychic wife and other people, some of whom were merely attendants. Breyer, who believed he was the reincarnation of Jacques de Molay, tried to reach the ghost of Guillaume de Beaujeu, whose remains had been placed close to the treasure underneath the treasure. Apparently Breyer was successful in this attempt, as de Beaujeu had asked for a certain ritual to be performed so that his spirit could be brought back to life. The ritual supposedly involved the sexual union between man and wife at Arginy, whereupon the resulting child would be the reincarnation of the former Grand Master.

Breyer stayed on at Arginy castle from 1952 until 1959. He stated that it was "a haunted place, but in the most lofty sense of the word: it is a place of high initiation." For seven long years, Breyer did all kinds of occult works and magical rituals, hoping to contact the souls of eleven Templars whose spirits had been charged with guarding the treasure that lay in Arginy's subterranean chambers. Perhaps the entire history of Breyer's searches seems foolish, but it is known that during those seven years he did discover an underground chamber and locate many entrances to the underground kingdom of Arginy. He reportedly found several small objects that were lying in numerous small holes. Some of these objects are allegedly kept in a private collection.

It seems that Breyer's supposed contact with the spirits of these

deceased Templars was rewarding for him, and it is certain that such contacts formed the basis for Breyer's research. Some of his contacts went extremely far on occasion, for certain rituals—today known as the "Rituals of Arginy"—apparently involved small children—a boy and a girl of about eight years old. Breyer left Arginy, saying contact with the entities was now established and occurring on a regular basis, not haphazardly as before.

During his time at the castle, Breyer prepared several books, but these are difficult to access at present. His most famous book is *Arcanes Solaires*, "dedicated to the Ancient 'Arch Masters', eleven in all, who came to help me during my seven-year stay at the castle of S." In referring to Arginy, Breyer always denoted it with the letter "S", or, even more commonly, with the symbol "\$". Breyer indicated that *Arcanes Solaires* is the résumé of the secret inheritance of the last Grand Master of the Temple, Jacques de Molay. He claimed to have told this story to the walls of the castle, and, like certain inhabitants before him, to have placed alchemical graffiti on the castle walls.

Breyer then founded a neo-Templar order, the Sovereign Order of the Solar Temple. Although this Order cannot be confused with the Order of the Solar Temple—responsible for the collective suicide of 53 people in Canada and Switzerland in 1994 and of 16 people in France in 1995—it is understood that Jacques Breyer was the great inspiration behind the foundation of the Order of the Solar Temple and also knew its leaders.

The Sovereign Order of the Solar Temple, however, was supposed to be the new Order of the Knights Templars. The eleven entities with whom Breyer conversed had requested that Breyer raise the spirit of former Grand Master Guillaume de Beaujeu in order that he could guard the development of the "resurgence" of his Order. As the story goes, everything had been put in place so that the ritual could be conducted, but apparently something was not quite right at the last moment. Something happened that no one had prepared for, and the experiment turned into a nightmare. Through personal research and interviews with the local villagers who lived on and around the estate, we learned that strange noises,

followed by horrible cries coming from the Tower of the Eight Beauties were heard ever more frequently. Luminous events sparked off by these rituals preceded the fierce escape of the participants.

Even though the resurrection of Guillaume de Beaujeu was probably unsuccessful, it seems quite certain that some or several of the eleven guardians were liberated but chose to remain voluntary captives of Arginy castle.

The Sovereign Order of the Solar Temple (OSTS) was the exoteric result of the initiates' constant participation in events that transpired at the castle. The Order elected its first Grand Master in 1966, and announced its existence the following year in the form of an association. The Order was officially recognised by Prince Rainier III of Monaco—the location of the Order's official headquarters. Book publishing is one of its functions.

The OSTs was the inspiration for most neo-Templar orders that have subsequently seen the light of day, including the already mentioned Order of the Solar Temple, but also the Renovated Order of the Temple—



The house where Jacques Breyer stayed at Arginy

the ORT. Researchers investigating these orders claim to have found evidence that they are closely connected to extreme right-wing circles, particularly the Italian *Propaganda Due*, P2. Even if this is correct, it should be noted that from its inception the OSTS seems to have been of a totally different calibre. Indeed, it is more likely that any such links were merely the result of certain people's interest in Breyer's works and his organisation.

THE SECRETS STAY HIDDEN

Though numerous places claim to hold the treasure of the Templars (some as far as away as Canada), Arginy is arguably the only place where such important events have transpired. Though several people would wish that the castle, and what has transpired there, did not become public knowledge—if only because of the gruesome events that eventually led to the collective suicides of 1994 and 1995—it should be remembered that what took place at Arginy had one goal: to give mankind an important revelation. In former centuries, such information was held by the secret circle within the Knights Templars. This may explain why Breyer and other key people went to Arginy in the years following 1952 and participated in strange magical rituals: they believed Arginy held the key to something very important.

Unfortunately, whatever that revelation was, it has been suppressed. It does seem most likely, though, that the castle holds within its walls one of the most important secrets of the Knights Templars. When this secret will be revealed—or whether it will be revealed at all—is not known.

Since 1959, many people have attempted to fathom this enigmatic secret. Having lived around the castle of Arginy, I am aware that many curious, painful and sometimes dangerous things happen every time someone tries to grasp the terrible secret. Local folklore has it that only one person is designated and recognised by the deceased Templars to have access to them without risk to his or her life. The tradition thus reactivated, it is claimed that the Order shall rise from its ashes towards a higher and more certain glory.

Perhaps the French author Robert Charroux found the key when he deciphered this passage from Breyer's book: "Think hard: the great art is Knowledge."

About the Author & Editor:

André Douzet was an architect before turning his attention to full-time research into the mysteries of France, particularly the Templars. He is the researcher who brought forward the *maquette* possessed by Abbé Bérenger Saunière, the prime-mover behind the Rennes-le-Château mystery.

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Note:

A 60-page booklet, written about Arginy and the survival of the Templars, is now available. It contains photographs and documents, including the "Document Rubant" which details the Order's survival. The booklet can be purchased for USD\$15.00 from the Netherlands contact address listed at the beginning of this article (foreign orders, add USD\$5.00 surface mail or USD\$10.00 airmail).

Charles G. Addison's classic text, *The History of the Knights Templars*, originally published in 1842, has recently been republished by Adventures Unlimited Press, with an extensive introduction by David Hatcher Childress. To obtain a copy in the US, telephone Adventures Unlimited on (815) 253 6390; elsewhere, contact your local NEXUS Office for details.